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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, before whom the lives of all are exposed and the desires of all are known, continue to be at work in our lives.

Use our lawmakers as instruments of Your purposes, so that Your will may be done on Earth and Your kingdom may be established. Prompt our Senators to yield to the unfolding of Your mighty providence, as You remind them that our times are in Your hands. May they refuse to boast about tomorrow, depending upon Your strength and sufficiency for each day.

Great and marvelous are Your works, O God. Just and true are Your ways, O King of Kings.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 12, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,  
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following any leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m. today. The majority will control the first half of that, the Republicans the second half. At 11 a.m., the Senate will proceed to executive session to debate the confirmation of two prospective judges, Briccetti and Kronstadt. At noon, there will be a rollcall vote on confirmation of the Kronstadt nomination. The Senate will recess from 12:30 until 2:15 to allow time for the weekly caucus meetings.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

### THE DEFICIT AND THE DEBT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as the Senate gets back to work this week, it is worth noting that a sea change appears to have taken place in Washington over the past few weeks. Just 2 months ago, the President proposed a vision of government that ignored the fiscal crisis virtually everyone else in the country knows we need to address. And Democrats in Congress proposed that rather than cutting Washington spending, we instead raise taxes on oil and gas companies, who, as we know, would pass it along to American consumers in the form of higher gas prices, at a time when gas prices are double what they were a mere 2 years ago.

In other words, it wasn't that long ago that both the White House and Democrat leaders in Congress were doing everything they could to ignore the Nation's \$14 trillion debt and to preserve the massive growth in government that they have presided over the past 2 years. But at some point in the past few weeks, Democrats in Washington finally got the message. The ground shifted and spending reductions Democrats recently described as "extreme" and "draconian," they are now calling "historic" and "commonsense." The debate has turned from how much to grow government to how much to reduce it.

This is a major departure from the standard Democrat position—and it suggests one of two things: either Democrats in Washington are finally waking up to the fact that our only hope of averting the kind of disaster we are seeing unfold in Europe is by forcing Washington to live within its means, or they have made a political calculation that Americans will no longer take them seriously if they continue to pretend otherwise. But either way, there now appears to be a bipartisan agreement in Washington that something serious must be done. Which brings us to an announcement by the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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